



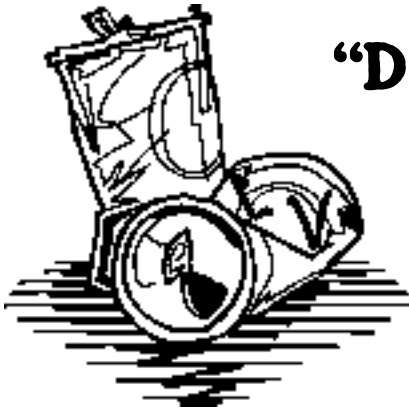
# Lake Mead National Recreation Area Environmental Education

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## **CLASSROOM PROGRAM**

### **Grade 5**

### **“Don’t Be Trashy!”**



#### **THEME**

We can reduce the amount of trash we throw away and contribute less to our landfills if we reduce, reuse, and recycle.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will describe what happens to trash after it is thrown away.  
Students will name two negative impacts of trash at Lake Mead NRA.  
Students will describe two ways they can reduce, two ways they can reuse, and two items that can be recycled from trash that they generate.

#### **VOCABULARY**

biodegradable - having the ability to be broken down into simpler components by living organisms  
decomposition - the process by which materials break down or degrade  
landfills - depressions in the ground that are lined with clay or plastic and then filled with garbage  
recycle - to break down metal, glass, plastic, or other recyclable materials and make them into new products  
reduce - to cut down on the amount of waste through wise purchasing and packaging decisions  
reuse - to find another use for an item rather than throwing it away

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Each year we generate five billion tons of solid waste in the United States. From filling up landfills to litter at the lake, disposal of all this waste can pose a challenge. One of the most promising solutions involves cutting back on the amount of trash we generate in the first place. Currently only about 10% of our solid waste is recycled or reused. Through increasing this percentage we can reduce the amount of waste going to landfills, save money, and conserve resources and raw materials.

## **BEFORE THE RANGER VISITS YOUR CLASSROOM**

Have your students collect two pieces of what they think is trash. These pieces of trash can be used by the ranger in discussing the decomposition rate along with whether any of the trash can be recycled, reused, or reduced.

## **AFTER THE RANGER VISITS YOUR CLASSROOM**

Now that your students understand reduce, reuse, and recycle, have them create a "trash journal." Each student keeps a journal of the amount of trash they throw away at school; this will include lunch, and any other items that are thrown away. Figure out how much trash the class as a whole has produced. How can the class reduce, reuse or recycle to minimize their contribution to the landfill?

## **REFERENCES**

Braus, Judy, *Ranger Rick's Nature Scope - Pollution: Problems and Solutions*  
National Wildlife Federation, (1990)



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**<http://www.nps.gov/lame/classroom>**